

## Abstract

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“Lone wolf” terrorism, perpetrated by independent assailants without organizational support, has been attracting growing attention from scholars and policy makers in recent years, as the phenomenon is becoming more and more widespread around the world. Nevertheless, the research on “lone wolf” assailants is still in its infancy, especially in the Israeli-Palestinian case, where this type of terrorism fully erupted only in 2015.

In light of the above, this paper examines the characteristics of the terrorist attacks and the personal traits of the assailants during the “Knives Intifada” In Israel (2015-2017) in order to shed some light on the “lone wolf” Palestinian terrorism. This terrorism wave is analyzed employing advanced statistical methods, using a unique dataset constructed for the purpose of this paper, consisting of data on 363 terrorist attacks that were perpetrated by 420 assailants between October 2015 and December 2017.

The empirical analysis suggests that even though these assailants usually acted without any help or guidance, they were not completely alone – but acted as a part of a wide social network that gave them moral support and motivation, causing the attacks to spread like an epidemic – especially in the city of Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the “lone wolf” terrorists, though lacking in criminal experience or training, were quite similar to their “organized” predecessors in terms of age and family status. The initial evidence also indicates that they were not considerably poor or uneducated. Since they were not screened by a terrorist organization for their skills – additional explanations are needed in order to explain the negative correlation previously observed in the literature between terrorism and poverty or lack of education.